

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Whitfield**  
**Subcommittee on Energy and Power**  
**Hearing on “The North American Energy Infrastructure Act”**  
**October 29, 2013**

*(As Prepared for Delivery)*

Today’s hearing is on H.R. 3301, the “North American Energy Infrastructure Act,” a bipartisan bill authored by Chairman Fred Upton and Representative Gene Green.

Over the last several months, this committee has received compelling testimony detailing how the United States has entered a new era of energy abundance. New technologies and American innovation are unlocking vast amounts of previously untapped domestic energy resources, meaning greater access to affordable and reliable energy for all Americans. In fact, the Energy Information Administration recently reported that the U.S. will be the world’s top producer of petroleum and natural gas in 2013, surpassing both Russia and Saudi Arabia. And we continue to be one of the world’s leading producers and exporters of coal.

This energy boom is having a dramatic economic impact, creating thousands of new jobs and paving a path toward a brighter energy and fiscal future. A recent study from global consulting firm IHS concluded that domestic energy production now supports 1.2 million jobs directly or indirectly, and that the number is expected to grow to 3.3 million by 2020. The study also found that domestic oil and gas production added “more than \$1,200 last year to the discretionary income of the average U.S. family” and “new energy’s contribution to U.S. families’ disposable incomes will hit \$2,000 per household per year by 2015.” During this time of stagnating household incomes, this should give us all hope.

The energy revolution bodes well not only for U.S. economic and security interests, but it also offers significant advantages for our North American allies: Canada and Mexico. Based on current projections, many analysts believe that the U.S., Canada, and Mexico could finally achieve North American energy independence by the end of the decade.

But energy supply alone is not sufficient to achieve North American energy independence. We must also have in place the energy infrastructure necessary to deliver affordable and reliable energy across our northern and southern borders. This means being able to site and construct oil and gas pipelines and electric transmission lines to carry energy and electrons across the borders of the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Additional infrastructure will create a more efficient North American energy market. For example, the reason natural gas is currently being flared is simply because there is insufficient infrastructure to move it; nor is there enough of a domestic demand. H.R. 3301 is part of the solution to that problem.

The legislation before us today will modernize and reform the approval process for energy infrastructure projects that cross the borders of the United States. As we have witnessed in previous contexts, trying to get approval for energy projects that cross our national borders has become an increasingly lengthy, confusing and politically-influenced process. H.R. 3301 will bring much-needed certainty and fairness to the process for constructing cross-border projects for all types of energy infrastructure-whether it be oil or gas from the Bakken, or new hydro or solar generation from Canada or Mexico. Its passage will help to encourage investment in new job-creating energy infrastructure needed to transport North America’s growing energy supplies.

I want to thank Chairman Upton and Congressman Green for their work on H.R. 3301. I am proud to be an original co-sponsor of this legislation and I am pleased to see that it already has broad bipartisan support. Moving forward, it is my hope that all Energy and Commerce Committee members will be able to support this important legislation.

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